CLAIMS

1. Control system for an appliance which processes household items such as food, laundry, crockery and the like, said household appliance (1) comprising an electronic control unit (2) and selection means (3), located in particular on a control panel of the appliance cabinet, for the selection of predetermined basic programs of said appliance (1), whereby, as part of said control system, a first set of information is stored in said electronic control unit (2) which are used by said electronic control unit (2), in function of selections made through said selection means (3), for controlling the performance of said basic programs, characterized in that, as a further part of said control system, a second set of information is stored in said electronic control unit (2), for enabling said apparatus to perform additional programs to those basic programs which can be selected via said selection means (3), said electronic control unit (2) being prearranged for interfacing with an external electronic device (5; 9; 9A) which enables the selection and the performance of said additional programs.

2. Control system, according to claim 1, characterized in that said electronic unit (2) comprises memory means (M), where in a first area (N) of said memory means (M) said first set of information are stored and where in a second area (A) of said memory means (M) said second seto of information are stored, used by the control system to interpret and/or convert into actions data from said external electronic device (5; 9; 9A).

3. Control system, according to claim 1, characterized in that interfacing means (4; 4A) are provided for allowing the connection between said electronic unit (2) and said external electronic device (5; 9; 9A).

4. Control system, according to claim 3, characterized in that said interfacing means comprise an interfacing module (4; 4A), to be associated with said electronic unit (2).

5. Control system, according to at least one of the previous claims,

characterized in that said electronic unit (2) comprises a microcontroller having a communication line to external devices.

6. Control system, according to at least one of the previous claims, characterized in that said electronic unit (2) is provided to transmit information relating to the operating status of the household appliance (1).

7. Control system, according to the previous claim, characterized in that said external device (5; 9; 9A) is provided for receiving said information relating to the operating status of the household appliance (1).

8. Control system, according to at least one of the previous claims, characterized in that said external device (5; 9; 9A) comprises a display device.

9. Control system, according to claims 7 and 8, characterized in that said external device is provided for displaying on said display device said information relating to the operating status of the household appliance (1).

10. Control system, according to at least one of the previous claims, characterized in that said household appliance (1) comprises a clock, that said external device (5; 9; 9A) comprises a battery and a relevant clock, and that said external device (5; 9; 9A) is provided for updating the clock of the household appliance (1).

11. Control system, according to at least one of the previous claims, characterized in that said external device (5; 9; 9A) is a Personal Computer (5).

12. Control system, according to the previous claim, characterized in that said Personal Computer (5) is connected with said household appliance (19) through a data bus, in particular a power line carrier system.

13. Control system, according to at least one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that said external device (5; 9; 9A) is a remote control (9; 9A), in particular of the infrared or radio-frequency type, and that said interfacing means comprise a signal receiver (4A) from said remote control.

14. Control system, according to at least one of the previous claims,

characterized in that a management program is provided, supplied on a suitable support (6), for said external device (5; 9; 9A), for an easy setting of said additional functions through said optional device (5; 9; 9A).

15. Control system, according to the previous claim, characterized in that said management program provides control routines for avoiding the wrong or improper programming of the household appliance (1).

16. Control system, according to the previous claim, characterized in that said management program comprises utilities functions for the use of the household appliance (1), such as a cook-book for the use of an oven or a database for the food preserved in a refrigerator.

17. Method for programming an electronically controlled appliance (1) for processing household items such as food, laundry, crockery and the like, said appliance (1) being able to perform basic functions and additional functions, where said basic functions can be selected by standard control means (3) comprised in said household appliance (1), a first set of information being stored in an electronic control unit (2), which are used by said electronic control unit (2), in function of selections made through standard control means (3), for controlling the performance of said basic programs, and whereby a second set of information is stored in said electronic control unit (2), for enabling said apparatus to perform additional programs to those basic programs which can be selected via said selection means (3) characterized in that the selection of the additional programs is simplified by the use of an external electronic device (5; 9; 9A), to be interfaced with said electronic control unit (2), the selection of said additional program being possible only through the use of said external electronic device (5; 9; 9A).